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COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION

Letter dated 2 December 1996 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In connection with the inclusion in the agenda of the General Assembly of a new item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization for Migration" and the circulation by the Secretariat of document A/51/232, I have the honour to bring to your attention the opinion of Mr. James N. Purcell, Director General of the International Organization for Migration, set forth in a letter dated 29 November 1996 (see annex) which was sent to me concerning the meaning of certain parts of document A/51/232.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly under agenda item 161.

(Signed) S. LAVROV

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ANNEX

[Original: English]

Letter dated 29 November 1996 from the Director General of the International Organization for Migration addressed to the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations

I have the honour to refer to the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) being submitted to the General Assembly for adoption and to the explanatory memorandum on IOM (A/51/232, annex). One sentence of the latter document indicates that IOM's independent status has occasionally permitted it to operate in areas such as "in Chechnya, at a time when the United Nations was unable to gain access" (ibid., p. 4, para. (a) (v)).

This sentence might convey the impression to some readers that the Russian Federation prevented the United Nations from acting in the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation. I wish to assure you, however, that IOM never intended to convey such a message. In the Chechnya operation, IOM was able to count on the long-standing and efficient support of the Russian authorities, so that it could start its activities in Chechnya at a time when the United Nations, at the invitation of the Government of the Russian Federation, was still considering possible operations inside Chechnya. In retrospect, I do recognize that the drafting of the explanatory memorandum could have been more precise, so as to avoid any potential misunderstandings or misinterpretations.

I trust that the above clarifies the situation and I do indeed regret any confusion which might have been created by the formulation of the explanatory memorandum.

(Signed) James N. PURCELL